

## Hepatocellular Carcinoma Case: Newly Diagnosed in a University Hospital Check-up Unit

### Hepatoselüler Karsinom Vakası: Üniversite Hastanesi Check-up Ünitesinde Yeni Tanı

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#### Summary

Everyday many people go healthchecks even if they are healthy. In medical communities some thoughts, it may cause unnecessary diagnosis and tests which enhances the health anxiety. But most views agree that routine health checks lead to early diagnose of the diseases and cost effective treatments. A 75-year-old male who admitted to the hospital for his annual check-up was reported. Some blood tests, chest X-ray, echocardiography and complete abdominal ultrasound were performed. After completing the tests, findings lead us that he might had a cancer. For the further evaluation and treatment, he was oriented to the other departments of the hospital and he diagnosed as hepatocellular carcinoma. Despite his high stage cancer, he is still under treatment. In this case we understand how important is annual checks and health check-ups.

**Key words:** check-up, hepatocellular carcinoma, primary care

#### Özet

Sağlıklı olmalarına rağmen hergün birçok insan sağlık kontrollerine gitmektedir. Tıp camiasındaki bazı görüşler bu durumun gereksiz tanı konmasına ve tetkik yapılmasına neden olduğu ve sonucunda sağlık ankiyetesinin geliştiği yönündedir. Ancak çoğu görüş rutin sağlık kontrollerinin hastalıkların tanısının erken konmasını ve maliyet etkin tedavilerin verilmesini sağladığı konusunda hemfikirlerdir. 75 yaşında yıllık check-up yaptırmak amacıyla hastaneye başvurmuş bir olgu sunuldu. Kişiye kan testleri, akciğer grafisi, ekokardiyografi ve tüm abdominal ultrasonografi uygulandı. Tetkikler tamamlandıktan sonra elde edilen bulgular, hastanın bir kanser türüne sahip olabileceği konusuna yönlendirdi. İleri değerlendirme ve tedavisi amacıyla kişi hastanenin diğer bölümlerine yönlendirildi ve hasta hepatoselüler karsinom tanısı aldı. İleri evre kanseri olmasına rağmen hasta halen tedavi altındadır. Bu olgu ile yıllık sağlık kontrollerinin ve sağlık check-uplarının ne kadar önemli olduğunu anlamış olmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** check-up, hepatoselüler karsinom, birinci basamak

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#### Introduction

As a result of health checks at the time they are healthy, individuals are motivated to healthy lifestyle and they are in more collaboration with physicians about the management of their newly diagnosed diseases and life style changes,

Check-up is defined as health care motivated by the need to assess general health and prevent future illness rather than attend to symptoms. Screening tests are performed and counseling may occur during a general health check (1). Check-up

examination is the most common reasons among adults to seek medical attention (2). Approximately 44 million adults underwent a check-up in United States per year (3). Data from Canada showed that general health examination was the second common reason for medical visits after hypertension (4). Although we have no data, check-up is getting more common in Turkey day by day.

Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is the fifth most common cancer in men and eighth most common cancer in women world wide, resulting in at least

500.000 deaths per year. It accounts for 90% of all liver cancers. It is four to eight times more common in men and usually associated with chronic liver injury like hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) and alcoholic cirrhosis (5). Treatment depends on at which stage the tumor is. Prognosis is usually poor outcome. Only 10-20% of HCC can be removed completely. If untreated, disease will be usually deadly within 3 to 6 months (6).

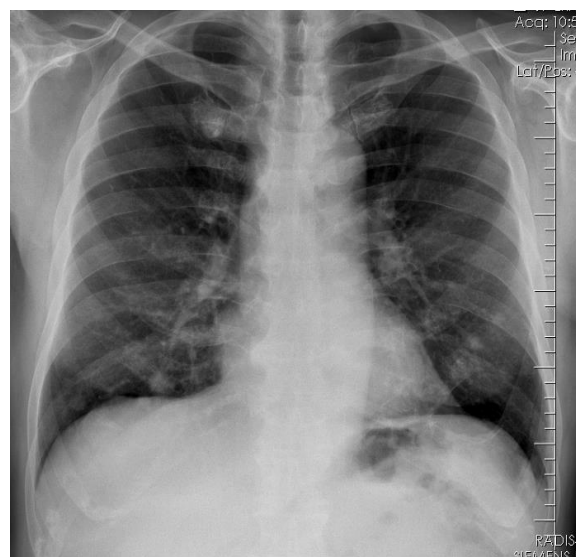
## Case Report

A 75 year old man admitted to a check-up unit for his annual health check-up. He had no complaints related to his health and declared that his last annual health check-up results were in normal limits. His past medical history revealed no chronic illness, no surgery and no allergies. He wasn't using any medications except vitamin pills. He smoked 37,5 packages/year and drank 3-4 glass of raki/day. Family history; his mother was died because of skin cancer at 76 years old, his father was died because of lung cancer at 67 years old and he has a 77 years old healthy brother. In his physical examination, his vital signs were in normal limits and there were no significant abnormal physical findings. We performed some blood tests, chest X-ray, echocardiography and complete abdominal ultrasound. His laboratory tests revealed Hb:17,5 g/dL, Hct: 52,34%, erythrocyte: 5,41 M/ $\mu$ L, leucocyte: 7730 $\mu$ L, platelets:235000 $\mu$ L, glucose: 87 mg/dL, creatinine: 0,73 mg/dL, uric acid: 7,3 mg/dL, cholesterols HDL: 36 mg/dL LDL: 102 mg/dL triglycerides: 72 mg/dL, ALT: 25 U/L, GGT: 332 U/L (8-61), alkaline phosphatase: 117 U/L, CRP: 52.8 mg/dL (<10), sedimentation: 22 mm/h, Anti-HCV: 0.07 (negative), Anti-HBs: 38.1 (positive immune for HBV), HBs Ag: 0,32 (negative), urine analysis and other tests were in normal range, chest X-ray; in the right lung basis and the left lung inferior zone there were multiple suspicious five nodules

(Figure 1), echocardiography was normal, complete abdominal ultrasound report; liver was in normal sizes, parenchymal echogenicity was normal, there was a 100\*58 mm sized-hemangioma in posterior segment of the right lobe and findings must be evaluated by abdominal computed tomography (CT).

After clinical, laboratory and radio diagnostic evaluation of the patient it was thought that, there could be a gastrointestinal system malignancy and it might be the metastatic hepatocellular cancer (HCC) of the liver. Then he was oriented to gastroenterology, lung diseases and oncology departments of the hospital. Dynamic-Liver-CT: malign-natured-mass in the liver, it may be HCC or colangiocellular carcinoma. Alpha fetoprotein level is 18,83 IU/MI (0,89-8,78) of high. Liver biopsy result was HCC. Further evaluation of these findings by the departments revealed metastatic hepatocellular carcinoma of the liver. After then he started to the treatment.

*Figure 1. Postero-anterior chest x-ray.*



## Discussion

Check-up is defined as health care motivated by the need to assess general health and prevent future illness rather than attend to symptoms.

Check-up is an area significant emphasis around the world. But there is no consensus among the leading experts that check-up is useful or harmful (2). Some of the experts disapproval that unnecessary investigations, which are not based on clinical evidence, are ordered for healthy individuals (7). And some of them support the health checks because of early diagnosis of the diseases. A study of Tanaka at al assessed routine

USG check-up in chronic liver disease and their goal of early diagnosis was achieved (8).

Although hepatocellular carcinoma is a disease with an extremely poor prognosis, recent use of radical therapy such as surgical resection has resulted a good number of cases of long term survival being reported (5). As we saw in this case, diseases could reach the end stage with no symptoms and signs. In his check-up visit his preliminary diagnose was HCC and by the consultation of the other departments his definitive diagnose was HCC as the same. He is still under treatment.

## Conclusion

Everyday many people go health checks even if they are healthy. In medical communities some thoughts, it may cause unnecessary diagnoses and tests which enhances the health anxiety. But most views agree that routine health checks lead to early diagnosis of the diseases and cost effective treatments.

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